

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 NSC-05 SAM-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1318

INFO AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 07678

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, HU

SUBJECT: RETURN OF THE HUNGARIAN CROWN

1. DURING AMBASSADOR'S RECEPTION FOR HEADS OF DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS IN LONDON ON MAY 20, HUNGARIAN AMBASSADOR DR. VENCEL HAZI HAD LONG CONVERSATION WITH EMBASSY OFFICER. ALTHOUGH THE CONVERSATION WAS GENERALLY ABOUT US/HUNGARIAN RELATIONS, THRUST OF HAZI'S REMARKS CONCERNED RETURN OF THE HUNGARIAN CROWN. HAZI MADE A POINT OF STATING THAT HIS REMARKS WERE STRICTLY PERSONAL AND SHOULD NOT BE CONSIDERED A HUNGARIAN REQUEST. AT THE SAME TIME HE IMPLIED THAT WHAT HE WAS SAYING WAS SOMETHING THE HUNGARIAN LEADERS WOULD LIKE TO SAY OFFICIALLY.

2. HAZI SAID THAT HIS GOVERNMENT COULD NOT UNDERSTAND WHY THE US COULD NOT RETURN THE CROWN. HE POINTED OUT THAT IT REPRESENTED 1,000 YEARS OF HUNGARIAN RULE AND HAD GREAT HISTORIC VALUE FOR THE PEOPLE OF HUNGARY. HAZI ADMITTED THAT US MIGHT HAVE BEEN RIGHT IN SAFE KEEPING THE CROWN AT THE END OF THE WAR. HE EVEN UNDERSTOOD THE PROBLEM WE HAD WITH RETURNING IT WHILE CARDINAL MINDSZENTY WAS ALIVE AND SOMEWHAT OF AN EMBARRASSMENT OF BOTH COUNTRIES. HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT NOW MINDSZENTY HAS PASSED ON AND WE HAVE REACHED AGREEMENT ON PROPERTY SETTLEMENTS

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AND OTHER CLAIMS AGAINST THE HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT. HAZI

SAID THAT IT WOULD BE BOTH A HUMANITARIAN GESTURE AND A GREAT CONTRIBUTION TO IMPROVING US/HUNGARIAN RELATIONS IF WE COULD NOW FIND A WAY TO RETURN THE CROWN -- AS HE PUT IT, A LITTLE BOOST FOR DETENTE WHICH WOULD COST THE AMERICAN PEOPLE NOTHING, BUT BE OF GREAT BENEFIT TO HIS COUNTRY.

RICHARDSON

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